



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

USAID **50** ANNIVERSARY

SNAPSHOT

Road to Poppy Eradication

Resurfaced roads help farmers get to market quickly



Photo: USAID/IDEA-NEW/M. Osman Hassani

The Sakha Wajinj Road provides easier travel to markets for residents.

New roads often allow farmers to use vehicles in places previously only accessible by donkey. Produce arrives to the market in good shape, allowing farmers to sell it for a good price.

Easy quick access to market centers allows farmers to reach agricultural retailers, avoid traders offering low prices at the farm gate, and transport more produce at a lower cost and in better condition, all of which contribute to stronger incomes.

To ease the difficulty of travel for some communities in northern Afghanistan, USAID constructed the Kooche Hisar and Sakha Wajinj roads in Badakhshan Province, and the Karte Itifaq Road in Baghlan Province. The new roads not only dramatically increased the speed of transport, accessibility by vehicle, and amount of goods transported, but also seem to have an effect on the crops planted by local farmers. With the new roads, the average time decreased from one hour and 50 minutes, to 23 minutes. Additionally, farmers brought an average of 1,170 kilograms more produce to market than before.

“Before, people had problems getting to the clinic quickly. Fruits and vegetables rotted on the way to market. There was lack of access to international and government aid because of bad roads. Carrying construction materials to the village was difficult, and it took three or four days to get our wood to Faizabad,” said Abdul Baseer of Baharak District.

In all three finished roads, farmers are now able to bring more goods to market. Farmers growing crops such as grains have now added fruit and commercial vegetables, which are more fragile to transport and bring much higher prices at the market, than standard commodity crops. All farmers who admitted to growing poppy last season have stated that they have stopped. While other factors may influence crop choice, the trend toward commercial crops suggests that access to a market center made those crops a viable choice.

USAID works with farming communities to improve farm to market roads, helping farmers form linkages to their local markets and improving agricultural incomes.